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SKETCHES OF RURAL LIFE
AND OTHER POEMS



SKETCHES OF RURAL LIFE
AND OTHER POEMS

BY
FRANCIS LUCAS

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK

1889

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MACMILLAN

TO
ALL LOVERS OF THE
RURAL LIFE OF OLD ENGLAND
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR



CONTENTS

SKETCHES OF RURAL LIFE

	PAGE
MILLER	3
THE HEDGER AND DITCHER	9
PLOUGHMAN	14
THE WOODMAN	19
THE TASKER	27
THE DEAD CARPENTER	33
THE SHEPHERD	38
THE POPLARS	44
THE FRENCHMAN'S GRAVE	47
SPRING	51
AUTUMN WINDS	54

SKETCHES OF THOUGHT

EVENINGS OF THE MAY	61
THE CHURCH BY THE SEA	65
NOVEMBER	70
THE WINDING WAY	73
EASTER	75
THE BATTLE OF EWTAW SPRINGS	78

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

	PAGE
THE SAILOR-BOY'S SISTER	83
THE VILLAGE BOY'S MORNING HYMN	86
WIND SONG	89
THE DOVE	92
JOY AND SORROW	94
EPIGRAM	97
ENGLISH BUDDHISM	100
THE DAY-LILIES	102
SONNET	104
IN MEMORIAM	106
IN MEMORIAM	108
SONNET	110
THE SOUL'S LAMENT	112
IN MEMORIAM	113
MUSINGS IN AN ARBOUR	115
SONNET	117

FRAGMENTS

FRAGMENTS OF A DRAMATIC PIECE	121
A RECOLLECTION OF STRAFFORD	123
LORD FALKLAND	124

SONGS IN THE OLD STYLE

VIOLET BUDS	127
WINTER	130
WHATE'ER I DO	132

CONTENTS

ix

APPENDIX

	PAGE
JOURNEY TO YORK	139
THE SONG OF THE LONDON BUTCHER OF FIFTY YEARS AGO	149
EPIGRAM	156

SKETCHES OF RURAL LIFE


MILLER

THE miller's wife has lost the bees
That swarmed across the water,
Why couldn't they swarm in the garden trees?
But now, for aught she hears or sees,
They're gone for good; she's ill at ease,
And calls her pretty daughter.
"Forego, my friend, your fuss and fright,
For as sure as you're alive
You'll get your bees again all right;
Those sweet young eyes, so large and bright,
Will find the swarm, and so ere night
You'll stock another hive."

Great hogs lie
In the miller's sty,
None of 'em ever opens an eye,
Unless it be when a troublesome fly
Is creeping about
The end of his snout,
Or the wash is poured into the trough hard by;
And the miller's cat,
She's old and fat,
She sleeps on the window-sill ;
But there's no rest while the big wheel goes
To the clack and dust of the mill.
Get money,
Get money,
Get money,
Get money,
There's plenty of sacks to fill.

The mid-day scorches the mill-yard,
But light winds fan the meads,
And, along the reaches of the stream,
Sweetly whisper the flags and reeds,
Sweetly the willows wave and gleam ;
And hark ! the idle cuckoo's voice
Is bidding the woods and fields rejoice,
For that life is only a sunny dream.
Down the race,
At a rattling pace,
The waters are flashing away,
And sweet to the man of the mealy face
Is the thought that he's made them pay,
And to know that the rain
Will bring them again,
To grind another day.
Yonder he stands at the door of the mill,

Leaning over the hatch ;
And let the wicked world wag as it will,
In the mighty struggle 'twixt good and ill,
Be sure that the miller will furnish still
His best for the baker's batch.
The miller, I wot,
Was on the spot
At the serving out of backs,
For I'm bold to say the one he's got
Could carry at least two sacks,
Nor half so much resent the weight
As his pocket would a threepenny rate,
Or a call for income tax.
Last night again
His loaded wain
Toward London city wended ;
His jolly team, so sleek and gay,



Through the gathering darkness pulled away,
Till the lark took up the nightingale's lay,
And the beaming hours became "to-day,"
Before the journey ended.
And many a night
The misty light
From the old mill's casement-pane,
While the hopper fed the glowing buhr,
Telling of honest folk astir,
Has cheered the lonely traveller
As he crossed the top of the lane.
The little neat farm-homestead shows
His thought and thrifty care—
Orchards well planted, stacks and mows,
And tillage gear and brindled cows,
And sturks and colts and rude old sows,
Whose pigs rush everywhere.

But to the miller his full meed
Of praise let none deny,
He grovels not in sullen greed,
He knows his neighbour in his need,
And many a charitable deed
Has done upon the sly.
And I trow the man of the mealy face
Maintains a humble trust,
That, when the miller has run his race,
And shaken off his dust,
His better part, still clothed in white,
Beside the river of pure delight,
Shall walk among the just.


THE HEDGER AND DITCHER

Alas ! where is now his leathern garb ?


HEIGH ho ! for the hedger and ditcher,
There's many wiser and many richer,
But leather, all leather from top to toe,
The very worst weather that ever can blow,
Is good enough for the hedger and ditcher.
Where the ragged fence runs up the hill,
With the thick gloves on his hands,
Busy with hook and billet and bill,
Yonder the hedger stands.
And he clenches and wrenches, and wattles and
twists

The stubborn stems by the strength of his wrists
As if they were hempen strands.
And the brier whose laughing roses swung
In June's delicious breath,
And the thorn where the linnet perched and sung
To his mate on her nest beneath,
And the berries of waxen pink that blush
On the spindlewood's slender spray,
Those merciless hands will lop and crush
Wherever they come in his way.
But before he's finished it all along,
He'll make it a job to see,
Cleaned and trimmed, and plashed and strong,
And hardly as high as your knee,
But, here and there,
He'll manage to spare
The plant for a hedgerow tree.

And now, from the black north again,
The blast comes howling by,
About the stackyards in the lane
The flocking small birds fly,
And the wintry day is waning wan
Along the western sky ;
The restless rooks sail to and fro,
With the roosting trees in sight,
And on the stubble fields below
The chattering fieldfares light ;
Where skylarks, cowering in the snow,
Await the coming night,
The hedger remembers his little home,
And he knows that the hearth shines bright.
And by and by, when the season fits,
You'll see him, with his spade,
Lustily tossing up the spits



Where drain-pipes must be laid ;
Or trenching deep where landsprings steep
The peat of the spongy slade,
For fencing in and letting out
Are both in the way of his trade.
And little he thinks that the stream set free
From its cradle under the willows,
Or the heavy clod of the fallow lea
Shall swell the voice of the mighty sea,
And the roll of mountain billows.
Now, if Solomon's self would tell his thoughts,
He'd own that he didn't know
How things come all of their different sorts,
And how they live and grow.
Nor for what cause,
Or by what laws,
The indifferent fates determine



That Jack should lack a coat to his back,
And Tom be robed in ermine.
This man to clutch a coronet
Amid the clash of swords,
Or to fence and hit,
With dazzling wit,
In tournaments of words.
One to raise high
The warning cry
To self-indulgent sinners,
And one to make his buttons fly
At corporation dinners.
And one to dance, and one to sing,
And one to post a ledger,
One to be oiled into a king,
And one to be a hedger.

PLOUGHMAN

So here we are again, my boys,
In the fine October days ;
And all about the teams are out,
And breaking up the lays.
And of all the teams I see about
I like mine best of any,
Three so well-bred, well-matched, well-fed,
They've cost a pretty penny.
And again the long clean furrow shows
How steadily the ploughman goes.

And the still clear nights of winter
 Shall find us harrowed and rolled,
And sting the sods and make the clods
 As mellow as garden mould.
Then we must get the yard stuff out,
 And, before the winter's through,
Candlemas weather will bring us together
 With work for the ploughs to do ;
Where again the long clean furrow goes
Close to the edge of the melting snows.

Oh ! the ploughman's lot is a humble lot,
 And homely is his fare,
 But we spend our toil
 On our native soil
And breathe our native air.

Though it howls across our broad hillsides,
And cuts us to the skin,
Our English blood, so warm and good,
Leaps up to drink it in.
The lands lie steep and the loud wind blows,
But as straight as a line the furrow goes.

Ah ! sweet is the smell of the fresh-turned earth
That follows on with the plough,
When the morning mist, by the light wind kissed,
Is lifting on the how.
And the herd is feeding along the lea,
And wide the swallows fly,
And the beauty of the early day
Is shed upon the sky ;
Then the wheat-fields ring with busy hoes,
And merrily the furrow goes.

There's that young Tom as drives for me,

 An honest, steady lad,

He can troll through a song or two,

 To hear him makes me glad.

And when I come to the headland,

 And hoist the ploughshare out,

I love to see how cleverly

 He'll bring his team about.

And again the long clean furrow goes,

Followed by the shining crows.

Tom loves his team, and they love him,

 It is their joy and pride

To tug along and hear the song

 Of young Tom at their side.

And what's much more, whate'er they do

 (And for this I thank the Lord),

No savage licks, no cruel kicks,

No swearing, no bad word.

Young Tom's alive to the ends of his toes,

But his heart's as kind as this furrow goes.

And there's another field to plough,

And other seed to be sown,

But to plough that field and win the yield

Is not for man alone.

'Tis a field to be worked in night and day

With watching and waiting and prayer,

Yet the work shall be done and the harvest won

If man will do his share.

All this the honest ploughman knows,

And ponders well as the furrow goes.

THE WOODMAN

THE leaves have dropped from the summer shoots,
And the drowsy sap is down in the roots,
And the squirrel is rolled in his tail.
“Time to shut up,” says the woodlouse ;
“Fasten the door,” says the snail ;
And “Out and away,” says the woodman, and over
hill and dale.

The sound of my strokes
On the elms and the oaks
Shall ring upon the gale.
Wherever the bill has blazed the bark
The axe and saw must go,

In hedgerow, coppice, holt, and park
I'm bound to follow the deadly mark,
Whether I will or no.
For, if the woodman stayed at home,
The carpenter's handy skill,
The shipwright and the wheelwright,
And the wright that mends the mill,
And the tanner of hides,
And a host besides,
Must all of 'em stand still.
Oh ! the farmer's harvest is soon got through,
His hands are many and merry and strong,
And however much there may be to do,
The sun and the moon they help 'em along
Till the green boughs nod
On the last cart-load
Galloping home with shout and song.

But the woodman's harvest is long about,
It comes in the little days,
For him no harvest moon shines out,
No harvest home with song and shout
And feast his toil repays.
Cold sighs the wind round the faggot stack
When he shoulders his wallet and hies him back,
Followed along the forest track
By the scream of the angry jays.
Oh ! the woodman's work is a work of death,
And I often heave a sigh
When the huge old tree comes headlong down
And I hear the crash of his noble crown,
And think of the years gone by,
How it rocked and roared in the winter's blast
Or slept in the summer sky.
But yet there stands a mighty oak,

The pride of the country round,
That never shall feel the woodman's stroke,
Though he covers a rood of ground,
And many a roof-tree, many a keel,
And many a rib that living steel
Might long ago have found.
What generations of mankind
Have come and passed away
Since first he pierced the acorn's rind
And peeped into the day.
Than most of the great ones of this world
He's wiser, I should say,
For if his head is in the clouds
His root is in the clay.
Oh ! the beech upon the hungry chalk,
The fir that skirts the wold,
The poplar that guards the churchyard walk,

The ash that clothes his giant stalk
In velvet pearl and gold,
The elm that, in a day to come,
Shall carry the honest woodman home
To his rest in the churchyard mould,
When they're ready to fall,
There are uses for all,
Too many to be told.
The winter cut and the faggot work
Will see the dead months out,
And they won't be done
Till the bark will run
And the oak fall comes about,
And a shade steals over the primrose eye,
And the bluebell beds bring down the sky
To gladden the woods throughout.
Oh ! the woodman's wages are sure and good,

His tool is keen and his arm is strong,
And though the weather be never so rude,
Lustily in the lonely wood
He labours all day long,
And now and then wakes up the hills
With a bit of an old song.
Of lop and top he gets his share
To furnish his winter's store,
And a faggot or two he well can spare
To lay at the widow's door,
And if her old heart blesses him,
What could he wish for more?

Then hey for the wood, the joy of the wood,
In the stirring days of spring,
When the rainbow brightens in the breeze,
And the drops come pattering off the trees,

And all the sweet birds sing.

And hey for the wood, the pride of the wood,

In summer's noontide hour,

With all its pomp of boughs outspread,

While the great sun blazing overhead

Rolls on in all his power.

And hey for the wood, the smile of the wood,

When the noisy blast is still,

And the moon that brings the woodcock here

Lights up the glades, and the belling deer

Is heard upon the hill.

And oh for the wood, the moan of the wood,

When the cold is waxing strong,

And the gray sod shrinks as the dry wind bites,

And about the tracks like troubled sprites

The dead leaves troop along.

But ah ! before the warm south-west

Has drawn the winter's sting,
The flush on the tall elm's thickening crest
Shall call the rook to her wattled nest
And whisper the coming of spring.

THE TASKER

OLD England counts her herds and flocks
That roam o'er hill and dale,
And she loves the sight of the golden shocks,
And the sound of the tasker's flail.

Oh ! the tasker's flail, you may hear the sound
Before the days grow chill,
And if times are good, when June comes round
You'll hear it going still.

And I am a tasker bred and born,
As my father was before,



For twenty years I've dressed the corn,
And I will for twenty more.

And now the flocks are on the browse,
The lays are all alive,
Close to the hurdles busy ploughs
Their shining coulter drive.

Sweet are the clean-cut sods that rise
As the slow team tugs along,
And about the gusty headlands flies
The jolly ploughboy's song.

Oh ! the ploughman's pride is in his team,
The shepherd's in his fold,
And the milkmaids tell of their crocks of cream,
And their butter as yellow as gold.



But I will tell of the old farmyard,
How it looks so bright and warm,
And the grand old trees that stand to guard
Against the winter storm.

I can't help thinking now and then,
As I toss the cavings out,
And heifer, hog, and speckled hen
Are waiting round about,

And the little birds, to pick their mite,
Fly down into the straw,
It makes about the prettiest sight
That ever body saw.


For winter work, in many ways,
I know no place to match

This big old barn with its gloomy bays
And the moss upon the thatch.

And again and again the bays we'll fill,
As the stacks and mows come in,
Some for the mill, and some for the kill,
And some for the hostler's bin.

The rats and mice I often hear,
As they squeak and scuttle about ;
I guess they've got some neighbours near
They'd rather be without.

Poor things, I needs must call to mind
How they and many more
Have slept in peace, and woke to find
That Death was at the door.



For here the fierce old tomcat hides,
And the barn owl snores and blinks,
And between the sheaves the weasel glides,
And into the holes and chinks.

Ah ! may I ne'er lie down to sleep,
Nor meet the opening day,
Without a prayer that God may keep
All mischief far away.

Then let our floors send up the sound
Of the swinjel's measured stroke,
It makes the miller's wheel go round,
And the cottage chimneys smoke.


And as I work I seem to see
That little home of mine,

Across the green beside the tree,
With the clothes upon the line.

So here with a contented mind
I'll thresh my winters through,
And hope that I may always find
Sufficient work to do.

And when the dreadful day comes round,
God only knows how near,
For that loud harvest horn to sound,
Which all the world must hear,

And the great Master shall begin
To purge His threshing-floor,
May our poor souls be garnered in
To bliss for evermore.



THE DEAD CARPENTER

SEE the old carpenter
Lies in his chamber there,
 So cold and still.
Wrap him in flannel then,
He'll ne'er be warm again,
 Do what you will.

Look how the freckles show
On his pale fingers now,
 Ah ! see the lips,
Where smiles in ambush lay,

Parted, forget their play,

White as his chips.

Yonder his working clothes,

Laid on the chair, repose,

Folded so neatly.

How smooth the pillow's kept,

Sure the old man has slept

Deeply and sweetly.

And when the casement-frame

Shook with the wind that came

Greeting him gaily,

What time the fervent lark

Sent through the flying dark

His glad *réveillés*,



Still the old carpenter

Lay on and didn't stir.

Work might be needed,

Work that his head had planned,

Work that he'd got in hand,

Nothing he heeded.

How calm that lifted brow !

Where are its troubles now ?

They have been many.

Down those cheeks, now so cold,

Often the tear has rolled,

Unseen of any.

Loved ones that passed away,

Dear as the light of day,

Left his home dreary ;

But a hale life well spent,

Busy and innocent,
Kept his heart cheery.

He'd a kind word for all,
And help at every call
Gave like a brother.
We may not break his rest,
Where shall we go in quest
Of such another?

Bome, Bome, Bome, Bome,
Carry the carpenter to his long home,
Close at the side of his workshop wall,
Need is none of plume or pall,
But the blackbird in the churchyard tree
Shall pour out his richest melody,
As we lay the old man down to rest
Among those he had loved in life the best.

For the sigh of his saw and the sweep of his plane

We shall never hear again,

And the shavings on his workshop floor

Shall rustle under his foot no more,

Bome, bome, bome.

THE SHEPHERD

THE lambfall in the great down-flocks on the hill farms in Berks, etc., is a long time of anxiety to the shepherd, beginning in February or sooner and seldom quite ending till May, so that all this while there are young lambs to think of.

There seems to be a tendency in the young of most animals to fatten on the mother's milk. Some farmers are of opinion that the playfulness of the lambs operates as a check on this tendency, and pen in the lambs as much as possible. We cannot blame them for it, but 'tis sad to think of.

Just half a word of the name of the sheep-dog. "Ball," the abbreviation of Baldwin, was a dog's name when Henry the Eighth was alive. It has been a favourite name. Is it not admirable? Only think of it borne on the echoes of the White Horse!

SHEPHERD, what of the night?

Shepherd, what of the night?



Oh ! the night is cold and the night is long,
But the fold-yard lies knee-deep in straw
And the ewes are hearty and the lambs come strong,
And as many couples as ever I saw,
And God's great flock is out on high,
And only He can count them all ;
He watches, and leads them through the sky,
And none of 'em wander and none of 'em fall.
And He watches too my winter fold,
To bless the young lambs born in the cold,
And to show 'em the way to their mother's teats,
Which swell with milk warm, sweet, and new.
Oh ! sir, it puzzles my simple wits,
And I thank the Lord the long night through
For His goodness to the lamb and the ewe.
We shepherds that are out o' nights
We see God's wonders more than most,

The thousand thousand thousand lights
That in the day are lost.
We see His shining messengers
That glide about among the stars,
And the crimson flush and the golden gleams,
And the pale streamers, shooting high
Along the bridge of the northern sky,
That come and pass away like dreams.
And what good shepherds saw and heard
One winter's night long time ago
Is written in God's holy Word.
For simple shepherd folk were first to know
When the great Shepherd came to dwell below.


But when the winter is past and gone,
And the long, strong days begin to come on,
And the primrose tufts are bathed in dew,



And the skylarks carol up in the blue,
And the young lambs scamper and bound and
prance,

As if they didn't know what to be at,
They are so jolly and bold and fat ;
And over the waters the sunbeams dance,
And the lapwings toy upon the gale,
And the cuckoo answers the sound of the flail,
Oh, in the merry time of spring,
The shepherd's life is the life of a king !

At last there comes the sorrowful day
When the master sends the lambs away,
And the shepherd's aware that it must be so,
But it makes his heart ache when they go.
Well, there's my old dog Ball and I,
We could tell you something of wind and weather,



Through hot and cold and wet and dry
We've shepherded some few years together.
Yonder he lies upon the sack,
With the bottle and lanthorn at his back.
But if I should begin to tell you all
Of the knowing ways of my old dog Ball
I'm sure before I got half through
You'd say, "Come, come, that can't be true."
But there's one thing I'm bound to own,
That if I never chucked him a bit or a bone,
And if I raged and stormed and swore,
And beat him till his ribs were sore,
He'd only love me all the more.
And I often, *very* often, think
How happy I should be
If I could only love my God
As my old dog Ball loves me.

For, whether we thrive or whether we starve
We all fare better than we deserve.
I've every comfort I could wish,
And manage to pay my way,
And furthermore I've a little store
Against the rainy day.
My cottage home the Lord has blest,
My children are my joy ;
I've two fine girls, and for the rest
There's just one little boy.
A better child man never had,
And we reckon, if God wills,
To bring him up a shepherd lad
To live on the healthy hills.

THE POPLARS

THOSE poplars tall, they kiss the sky
With a whisper and a sigh,
As if disclosing what they know
Of the wicked world below ;
But a thousand flowers of loveliest hue
In the meadows round them drink the dew,
And the merry birds, great and small,
Love to sing in those poplars tall.

Those poplars tall, they catch the gleam
Of the dawn's first smile and the day's last beam,



They see the stir of life begin,
They watch the villager out and in ;
Over the chimney and into the grave
Alike they look and calmly wave ;
Thoughts of sorrow, but sweet withal,
Haunt the shade of those poplars tall.

Those poplars tall, their stately forms
Have wrestled with a thousand storms,
And the whelming snow and the shattering hail,
And the rushing wind in vain assail ;
Nor sapping wet nor winter's tooth
Has touched the glory of their youth ;
And the time that comes for the high to fall,
Long may it spare those poplars tall.
Those poplars tall were full in view
When first this vital air I drew,

And the dearest hearts that have beaten with mine
Have leaped at the sight of their lofty line.
And I will spend my life's brief span
Where theirs and mine alike began,
There will I meet the final call,
Then bury me under those poplars tall.

THE FRENCHMAN'S GRAVE

G. HUTIN, engraver, who became entirely deaf and blind. He was supposed to have lost his sight in trying experiments in colour-printing. Died 16th June 1871 ; buried in the churchyard of St. Ippollitts, Herts.

FULL ten feet deep the Frenchman lies,
Where none but the worms may find him,
Of his deaf old ears and dark old eyes,
There's nothing now to remind him.

He has done for ever with hopes and fears,
And is past all pain and danger ;
And freed from the load of the long, long years,
Which he bore with the lot of a stranger.

In the garden-path he used to pace ;
The blackbirds and the thrushes
No more shall see the uplifted face
Come out between the bushes.

As sure as the returning day,
Appeared the well-known figure ;
He recked not summer's fiercest ray,
Or winter's fellest rigour.

Rapidly footing to and fro,
Incessantly he muttered,
As one who cherishes a woe
Too heavy to be uttered.

No loss of friend or child or wife
Mourned he, but that bereavement

Which robbed a solitary life
Of a high aim's near achievement.

To what his patient burin's art
So cunningly could render,
He deemed that Colour should impart
Her eloquence and splendour.

And ah ! when full success in view
Held a bright crown before him,
Invidious darkness came and threw
A lifelong bondage o'er him.

And who can tell how dire the stress
On that impetuous spirit !
Those years of hateful idleness
And undistinguished merit.

Then, though the fair land of his birth
Shall never more behold him,
A hallowed nook of English earth
Shall lovingly enfold him.

While resting there his weary frame
Abides the great to-morrow,
The Frenchman for our own we'll claim
In the brotherhood of sorrow.

SPRING

Oh, how pleasant is the sound

Of the waters flowing !

Gentle spring is coming round

And bitter winter going.

Silently across the hills

Gleams and shadows wander,

Where the joyous daffodils

All their glories squander.

Now the dancing rivulet's bed

Dons its bright apparel,

Realms of azure overhead

Ring with the skylark's carol.

The pensive primrose woos the light,

The palm gleams on the sallow,

And all the meadow banks are bright

With crowsfoot and marsh mallow.

Now with youthful hopes and loves

Thousand hearts are swelling,

Wooing swains and cooing doves

Tender tales are telling.

So we'll catch the golden day

While the dewdrop twinkles,

Joyous youth must soon give way

To old age and wrinkles.

But till the cope of final gloom

All creation covers,

Birds shall build and flowers shall bloom,

And spring call out the lovers.

AUTUMN WINDS

Lo ! we are come to tear
What late was blooming fair
In summer pride.
Thus through the bending tree
Wail the winds wofully ;
Hark, how they chide !

Over the wood we speed,
Over the flowery mead
Cheerless we blow.

Ruin of loveliness,
Sorrow and loneliness,
 Tell where we go.

Darkly we drive away
Warblings and melody
 From brake and bower ;
Mustering their myriads deep,
See how the swallows sweep
 Round the gray tower.

Them must we lead afar
Over the ocean bare
 To distant streams,
Where gentler aspects reign,
And summer pours again
 His golden gleams.

But from the waning year
Listen, ye proud, and hear
 Tidings of woe ;
High though your lineage be,
Dark is your destiny,
 Death shall bring low.

Avarice, relax thy care,
Worldly wealth soon shall wear
 Its beams away.
Soon must the grasping slave
Find in the greedy grave
 His kindred clay.

Brave hearts of jollity,
Full though the goblet be
 And loud the cheer,

Soon must the goblet fall,
And silence chill the hall,
Listen and fear.

Beauty that reignest now
Deep in the bosom's glow,
Queen of an hour ;
Time shall thy lustre dim,
Soon must thou yield to him
Thy fairest flower.

We too are fleeting fast,
Soon shall our wing be past
Through the clear sky ;
And the dull earth beneath,
Hoar with her frozen breath,
Desolate lie.

Her pains and pleasures all,

Her wants and treasures all,

Service and sway.

Flesh with its haughtiness,

Anguish and weariness,

Must pass away.

What "though our breath be rude,"

Soon is our strife subdued,

Hushed is our might ;

But Time with silent course

Stays not for fear or force


His fatal flight.

SKETCHES OF THOUGHT



EVENINGS OF THE MAY

THESE sad evenings of the May,
These sad evenings of the May,
Not all the full-blown pomp of June,
Which is to be here so soon,
Can e'er repay
For taking away
These sad evenings of the May.
These sad evenings of the May,
Glooming, gleaming, green and gray,
As with slackened rein I ride,



And my horse's silent tread
Gently tracks the lone hillside,
And night gathers overhead,
In a voice of human woe,
Thus, methinks, they speak to me.
What we bring we may not know,
What we leave we cannot see,
Thus we perish in bestowing ;
Tell us then, for we are going,
Is the green sward always green,
And is there always the overflowing
Of the perfume of the bean,
And the sweet smell of the young wheat growing
Under the twilight sheen ?
Hark to the chilly night-wind blowing,
Mighty June is hastening on,
Adieu ! adieu ! for we are gone.

Dear sad evenings of the May,
Shivering as they steal away.
How this wondrous life of ours,
Equipped for all sublime endeavour,
With all its light and all its powers,
Yearning, glowing, striving ever,
Loves these evenings of the May,
And to what their cold lips say,
Sends back an answer of good cheer.
Pensive sisterhood, farewell,
Destined soon to reappear,
I too am going, who can tell
Where I must meet my next New Year?
But Life means on, at Duty's call,
Forward, straight on, whate'er befall.
Storms and darkness on my path
Breed no semblance of despair,

Ever to the gates of death
My best offerings I bear.
What I bring, I bring in faith ;
What I leave, I leave with prayer.

THE CHURCH BY THE SEA

THE church clock sounds the midnight hour,
Over the waves ;
The stars look down on the belfry tower,
And the graves,
And the strand so wide,
Which the lingering tide
Lovingly laves.
And to the graves, the graves that lie
Gazing ever on the sky,
Wrapped in mute prayer,
The sea sends up a long-drawn sigh,
Where ? where ? where ?

Yes, where are some that should have come,
Sailors and fishermen, turning in
To sleep among their kith and kin
Quietly there?
Again, again,
Comes from the main
The melancholy, long refrain,
Where? where? where?
What mortal accents may relate
That history of varied Fate?
Light-hearted boys and strong brave men
Went, never to return again.
Whether gone down in foundered skiffs,
Close beside their native cliffs;
Or buried by the mad cyclone
In distant depths of ocean lone;
Or escaped and still afloat

(Tossing about the wide world round
Never, never to be found,
Clothed bones in an open boat);
Or left behind on the burning ship,
Or ground in the ice-floe's deadly grip,
Or sent from rafts and wrecks
To feed the sharks of tropic suns,
Or caught away in the cheer that runs,
With the smother of the blazing guns,
Along the bloody decks.
Ah, who shall tell,
Who shall tell
How their varied fates befell !
And of those who mourned them, many a one
To rest in the churchyard's ranks is gone;
And some still live to bear about
The burden of a ghastly doubt,

And often start as the wind goes by
Wafting aloft the wave's long sigh.
Distracting Grief will have its day,
And Memory learn a gentler sway,
Yet have we yearnings that would find
A more expanded scope,
And Fears that die to leave behind
The Phantom of a Hope.
And Fancy's ear will sometimes catch
The footstep or the lifted latch,
And visions of the night restore
The form we may embrace no more.
And still, as closer to our side
The voiceless Image seems to glide,
The features wear a pitying smile
That fondly bids us wait awhile.
Great Lord of Life, to whom alone

All depths of human woe are known,
We look for the hour that is to be,
Be it soon or be it late,
To bring Thy Dead again with Thee,
Oh ! grant us strength to watch and wait.

Amen.

NOVEMBER

NORTH WALES

EARLY BRITISH CHURCH

MUSINGS SUGGESTED BY ALL SOULS

YONDER he stands upon that beetling verge,
Swims round him the wet cloud, and far below,
Gathering at each recoil a huger flow,
Rolls in the booming surge.
Inland the valleys send up the year's dirge,
The roar of torrents through the boiling pools,
Choking the echoes ; and the mighty bulls
That front the outlets of the pasturage



Smother the mutterings of their jealous rage,
And creeping warily up from stage to stage,
The meagre flocks
Cull the scant browse upon the slippery rocks.

Before him and beneath him that dread space,
Behind him the dread mountains, and behind
The mountains the destroyer of his race ;
Yet in the old man's broad and fatherly face
There beams a fierce jucundity of mind.

And he has blessed this morning with his prayers
An unforgotten portion of his fold,
Where they lie gently lapped in the sweet mould
(And over them the rugged Cantred wears
A smile and calm as of accomplished cares),
Safe from the bitter Saxon and the cold.

Nor will he close his reckoning with the past
Until the challenge of his steadfast eye
Questions the visage of that weltering vast
Where all the world's days have gone down to die.
And shall it never, never deign reply?
Not so. Old faiths survive. The mighty hour,
In quest of which his Cymric fathers came,
Chasing and chiding day's declining power,
Is treasured in those deeps, anon to flame
With banners of deliverance sure, though late,
From all time's obloquies of blackest fame,
Wrongs that have reft of purpose, place, and name
Whole nations, crooked guile and cunning hate,
And codes of cruelty and creeds of shame
And all that the pure heavens abominate.

THE WINDING WAY

THERE's a winding way leads out of the town
By which we all must wend,
It only seems a very short way,
But nobody knows the end ;
 Up a gentle hill it climbs,
 Among the laurels and the limes.

In the moon of May the winding way
Rings with the nightingale's song,
In winter's nights with a trip and a skip
The sere leaves dance along ;

And is there not a sound of grief
In the trill of the bird and the trip of the leaf?

Oh ! varied and rich are the nightingale's notes,
But they seem to flow through tears,
And the leaves say, " Hush ! we are off and gone
To hide with the bad old years ;
But we're light of foot, and we mean to stay
Till we've found the end of the winding way."

EASTER

Now half the strength of this rude day is spent,

And in their nakedness and deep unrest

The woods are tossing, and his frown is bent

In ever-gathering shadows on the west.

And yet one shivering smile of palest gold

He pays the cherry-blossoms, dripping sleet ;

And through the pauses of the blast is rolled

The warble of the storm-cock, wild and sweet,

With sound of waters leaping down the glade,

Bidding the violets don their deepest dye,

And farther yet beyond the dun wold's shade
The pasque-flower lifts to heaven her fervent eye.

And we whose forfeit hopes are born anew
In bitterness of death this Eastertide,
Claim portion in the life which pulses through
The bosom of creation deep and wide.

And if not forty days and forty nights
Of loathing have quite slain the pride of flesh,
Lord, from Thine altar spurn not our soul's plights
Which we this day have made with purpose fresh.

O Thou to whom the life that is to be
Beats visible beneath the burial-sod,
In earnest expectation to be free,
And clothed on with the likeness of her God,

Pity in us the body of a death

Which bows the life that is into the dust,

We cry to Thee for liberty and breath,

And strength and purpose to maintain our trust.

Nor yet alone in anguish and in strife

And desolate faintness for Thy help we cry—

Lord, in the fulness and repose of life,

Be with us and preserve us, or we die.

THE BATTLE OF EWTAW SPRINGS

SEPTEMBER 8, 1781

BEHIND a cedar-scented drawer,
In an old black escritoire,
So faintly traced that you might think
Tears had mingled with the ink,
There had lain hid who knows how long
A little melancholy song.

Lives there a soul who loves to muse
'Mid Nature's softest, saddest hues,
Till tender memory would borrow
The wild enchanting notes of sorrow,
Down by the woodlands let him stray
To the Ewtaw springs at close of day.

Then, if no cry of beast or bird,
Or sound of mortal voice be heard,
The spirit, which is gentle and good,
Living in that lonesome wood,
Will warble forth this plaintive lay
By the Ewtaw springs at close of day.

“ Whoe’er you be who wander here,
Oh ! pause a while and weep a tear ;
Weep, gentle stranger, weep and wail,
For the white man he lay stark and pale,
From home and kindred far away
By the Ewtaw springs at close of day.

“ The evening sun went down the sky,
And distant grew the battle-cry,
Far, far aloof the war had rolled,
And the silent dews fell dim and cold,

When the warrior's pulse had ceased to play
By the Ewtaw springs at close of day.

“ With a solemn sound the woodlands wave
Their leafy banners o'er the brave,
And the trickling rivulet's chime
To my measured dirge keeps time,
In honour of the dead that lay
By the Ewtaw springs at close of day.

“ Still as the gentle waters flow,
Still throbs the aching wound of woe,
And many a mother's heart shall fail
When memory would bring back the tale
Of them that slept in cold array
By the Ewtaw springs at close of day.”

N.B.—The foregoing little ballad (a juvenile production) must be taken as a mere matter of imagination and sentiment, without reference to historical propriety.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS



THE SAILOR-BOY'S SISTER

THE chimney thunders, the weather-boards crack,

And we lie in our beds afraid ;

O Lord ! have mercy on my brother Jack

Afloat in the coasting trade.

I can't say where his ship may be,

And I hope she's well away ;

But such a night to be out on the sea,

Oh ! keep her safe, I pray.

When moon and stars show never a speck

To be seen through the rolling clouds,

And the waves rush over the good ship's deck,

And mount into the shrouds ;

And the boatswain's voice is all blown back,

And the water gains in the hold ;

O God ! have mercy on my brother Jack,

For he's so young and bold.

As long as the pumps can keep her afloat,

He'll be working stripped to the skin ;

And if they're obliged to lower the boat,


He'll be the last to get in.

And my father went tired to bed, I know,

And I hope he's fast asleep ;

But my mother she stays at her work below

That he may not hear her weep.




And we all of us pray to Thee, good Lord,
Who once didst walk the wave,
And still the tempest by Thy word,
That ship and her hands to save.

And so when she rounds the lighthouse buoy
Safe on the homeward tack,
How all of our hearts shall leap for joy
At the sight of my brother Jack.

THE VILLAGE BOY'S MORNING HYMN

THE shades of night are past and gone,
And I wake hale and strong,
And with the sweet, fresh breath of morn
Comes in the skylark's song.
Like him, O Lord ! I fain would raise
My song of thankfulness and praise.

How quietly I lay and slept,
Nor mischief nor alarm
Disturbed my rest, for I was kept
By Thy almighty arm.



I thank Thee, Lord, for all, and pray
Thy blessing on the coming day.

Oh ! bless our tender parents dear,
And keep them well and strong
For all they have to do and bear,
And spare them to us long.
And let our lives and actions prove
How much we feel their care and love.

Grant me this day, from hour to hour,
My duties to fulfil,
To do the utmost in my power,
And do it with good will.
Grant me for work and play a mind
Hearty and innocent and kind.

Oh ! keep me from all cruelty

 To any living thing,

From falsehood and bad company,

 Bad words and quarrelling.

So that my greatest joy may be

To know how near Thou art to me.

WIND SONG

(FOR CHILDREN)

OH ! the mast is bending now,
And the oak is rending now,
My face and my form no man can see,
But "I'm over the mountain and over the lea."
Listen, I am on the hill ;
Now again, with hoarser breath,
Rocking the woody vale beneath—
Never, never still.
Rolling clouds before me fly,
Ocean leaps as I hurry by ;

On earth and water, in fire and in air,
I am felt, yet none has seen me there.
I have a sound that is soft and sweet,
Gentle melody heard from far,
But my wings have a louder beat
When the withered heath I tear,
And round the castle bastion roar,
Or whistle and howl at the shepherd's door,
When the forests murmur deep
To the weary ploughman drown'd in sleep.
Anon I have a bitter moan
Which makes the widow feel alone,
And the child upon her knee,
Eying the window fearfully,
Say, "Mother, listen to the wind."
Me not weal nor woe can bind ;
Just as light and just as gay

I with the rolling war-cloud play,
And the din of battle bear,
As the rustic's merry lay
Over the harvest of his care.
Now this moment I am here,
But ere the daybreak I shall be
Curling the rough Norwegian sea ;
My wide wing winnowing over all,
Mountain, wood, and waterfall ;
And I have lost a good league's time
In singing thee this song of mine.

THE DOVE

DEAREST, though the latest comer
From the desert and the main,
Surest harbinger of summer,
Welcome to our shores again.

Oh, what thoughts fly forth to meet thee !
Thoughts of pardon, peace, and love ;
Summer's self seems born to greet thee,
Beauteous, meek, confiding dove.

What mysterious impulse urges
Thy swift pinions, bearing thus,

Over trackless sands and surges,
All thy fondest hopes to us ?

Did some dream, thy slumbers chiding,
Tell of shades where thou wast born,
Streams with gentlest murmur gliding,
Dewy mead and waving corn ?

Here no sorrow shall befall thee,
Freely through our borders roam,
Till declining days recall thee
To thy distant, southern home.

JOY AND SORROW

ONE sweet spring morn two sisters dear

Each other's gems would borrow.

"Sister," said Joy, "lend me a tear ;"

"Lend me a smile," said Sorrow.

Oh ! then the tender flashes

From Joy's large eyes of blue ;

Oh ! the twilight of Sorrow's long dark lashes

Where the dayspring gleamed anew.

Said Joy, "I weep this sweet springtide

With love and rapture flowing,

Because, alas ! I vainly chide

Its happy hours for going."

Said Sorrow, "I'd smile at dejection,

Or 'twere adding sin to sorrow

When the glory and shout of a glad resurrection

Are bidding the dead good-morrow."

Frolick troops of young lambs went

In and out of the gleams and shadows,

Budding groves their odours sent

About the breezy meadows.

Blithe thrushes sang, fond doves were cooing,

And the blackbird carolled clear,

For abroad in the woods and fields a-wooing,

Had come the hale new year.¹

¹ The poet's new year is surely still 25th March.

And the angels that watch this nether sphere
Cried, "Search the universe thorough,
And you'll find no jewel to match Joy's tear
Till you win a smile from Sorrow."

EPIGRAM

SULPICIA

THE CALENDS OF MARCH

(From the Latin)

SULPICIA keeps your calends, Mars,
Suppose you drop in and surprise her,
There's no such life among the stars,
And Venus shall be none the wiser.
Beware though, lest those radiant charms
Rob you for ever of your arms.
If wicked Cupid would devise
A scheme for all the gods' cremation,


Let him enlist Sulpicia's eyes,
And light them up for the occasion.
Go where she may, do what she will,
A quiet grace attends her still ;
She's lovely with her tresses free,
She's lovely when she binds her tresses ;
And as for colours, all agree
It doesn't matter how she dresses ;
She kills in purple ; and is quite
As dangerous, if not worse, in white.
Thus in the immortals' blest abode
Vertumnus through the seasons ranges,
And ever the delightful God
Displays new charms in all His changes
Best of the fair, to her are due
Soft wools twice steeped in Tyrian hue,
All that Arabia's happy sky

Perfects to odours most delicious ;
All that the dusky Indian's eye
Finds out, of gems most pure and precious,
Beside his wealthy streams that run
Close to the chariot of the sun.
So let us hail the festal day,
And hope for many more to follow ;
Ye powers of song, inspire the lay,
And lead the chorus, proud Apollo ;
For never sure could you desire
A theme more worthy of your lyre.

ENGLISH BUDDHISM

SONNET

So then our life is but a calenture ;
We voyage where neither wind nor tide avails,
Nor have we any home to cause or cure
All our regrets and longings, yet the lure
Which woos us to destruction never pales.
In face of such a creed all conscience fails,
And that prerogative of heart and aim,
Which universal Nature's motherly stir
Gives to the meanest atom, must defer
To each blind accident. Thus even to frame




A wish is madness. Night receives us all
Back to the nothingness from which we came,
And, in the balance of result, how small
The odds between an iceberg and St. Paul.

THE DAY-LILIES

SONNET

BLITHE June had dried the tears of shivering May
When, by the freshness of the morning led
About the garden terraces to stray,
Before me a refulgent border spread,
Set thick with golden lilies of the day.
I gazed enraptured on their charms, and said,
“Can even one moment upon which is shed
Such beauty and such sweetness pass away?
Oh! charge it not to fancy for a crime,
While the unnumbered ages onward roll



To the unnumbered spheres' majestic chime,
If one ephemeral gift of fleeting time
Speaks to the awakened and expectant soul
Of infinite perfection's endless prime."

SONNET

TRULY 'tis not man's wisdom nor man's praise,
Nor the poor dross which the world counts for
 gain,
Nor influence reaching wide as the sun's rays,
Nor even requited love, that can maintain
The soul amid her manifold decays ;
Not stillest nights succeeding calmest days
With slumbers light, but sound, that make care
 leave
His wrinkles to his pillow. So, good Lord,
For we hold life only by Thy reprieve,
Still stands the fatal sentence on record.

And most we thank Thee when we mourn and fear,
If in such intimations we perceive
Some sense of holiness—a note whose chord
Might find completion in a better sphere.

IN MEMORIAM

CATHARINE

DEAR sister, of the name immaculate,
What if thy years were few, thy life was long ;
And, if the pure in heart are blest, how great
Is thy beatitude ! Amid the throng
That for the coming of the Bridegroom wait
No lamp shall shed a light more clear and strong
Than thine. High gifts hadst thou to dedicate
To holiest ends. A rich and varied dower
Of intellect and soul. Thou wast a power
Of light and love, that would anticipate

Even our smallest needs, yet would not spare
Vigils of fond solicitude and care,
And tenderest offices, while every hour
Flew heavenward, winged with sacrifice and prayer.

IN MEMORIAM

ALFRED ELLIS, F.L.S., J.P.

VERSED in affairs, well fitted to direct,
With forecast and endurance and fixed aim ;
So fortified, yet hadst thou fullest claim
To more than admiration and respect.
No plea for pity or help couldst thou neglect
Or fail to recognise. No guilt or shame
To thee seemed past all measures to correct.
And into Nature's temple never came
A soul with more observant meekness decked.
Brave hope was thine, and love that never cooled ;

But, oh ! for us whom the exacting day
Still burdens, to behold a life so schooled,
So furnished, so contrited, and so ruled,
Snatched from us in its fulness, is dismay.

SONNET

VIRGIL

AND thou wert weary, weary with the strain
Of racking thought. The What, the How, the
Why,
Had haunted thee, till thy pure soul was fain
To fling the burden of existence by.
Then thou wouldst seek the rivers and the woods,
Sperchæus and, the joy of Spartan maids,
Taygeta and the deep cool solitudes
Of Hæmus, bosomed in enormous shades ;
Even there, to thee still audible, without

Wailed on the bad world and the Stygian fen.
Oh that some tidings might have reached thee then
Of that perfected Love, which should cast out
Falsehood and fear and enervating doubt,
And make divine the lives of common men !

THE STARS LAMENT

O LORD, THOU knowest what a sad eclipse
Has overcome my small reserve of faith,
So that the shadow of impending death
Visits me in my solitude and slips
My soul in terror and seals up my lips
From showing forth as thou they would Thy praise.
Long have I trod an ever-widening maze,
Groping among the tangled roots of things,
Where new results revive old questionings ;
Till, in the darkness of departed days,
All hope is swallowed, and the upward bent,
Which love and the ever-blessed heavens lent
To our young lives, is lost. Ah me ! how brief
The reign of tender thought and passionate belief.

IN MEMORIAM

A FATHER'S FAVOURITE QUOTATION

“Nunc viret omnis ager nunc omnis parturit arbos,
Nunc frondent sylvæ nunc formosissimus annus.”—*Virgil*.

O THOU by whom the vales of Mincio
Are vocal to all time ! And can it be
That my dear father speaks again to me,
Whispering those words of thine which he loved so ?
Something far holier than life's common flow
Comes in that memory coupling him with thee.
The glories which the circling year leads out
Rest nowhere, few abiding glories are.
The victor's laurel scarce outlives the shout

Worth welcomes and rolls onward with his car ;
But of the pure, the gentle, and devout,
Sweet inspirations reach us from afar,
Where they by God's great calm are walled about,
In fields of wondering bliss which no misgivings
mar.

MUSINGS IN AN ARBOUR

THE ROBIN

THOU treadest on withered leaves, O sacred bird !
Leaves red as thine own breast, but late how
 green ;
Naught but thy small sweet ditty now is heard,
And scarce a living thing around is seen
Save thee and my old spaniel drowsing here.
Ye fleeting vernal warblers, where are ye ?
Where is your melody, so rich, so clear ?
Ye are not in the dingle, brake, or tree,
Ah, no ! these autumn skies are all too cold ;
These blasts would freeze the current of your song.

Thus ardent fancy fades as we grow old ;
We may not childhood's ecstasies prolong
Like thine, sweet bird, throughout life's changeful
year ;
A temperate joy be mine, meek hope, and little fear.

SONNET

NIGHTINGALE—IN MEMORIAM

J. S. (a disappointed scholar)

SING on, brave bird. He cannot chide thee now
For adding night to sadness. In the deeps
Of an unfathomable quiet sleeps
The spirit which once mantled on that brow,
And spoke in those sad eyes. Nor ever creeps
Into his sweet forgetfulness the gall
Of disappointment, slights, and unsuccess,
Nor the despondency at matin-call
When needs still multiplied as means grew less.

Well, there were hours which even he could
Oddments of time which found him at his
By the loved stream or in the cool recess,
Under the shadow of his garden trees,
With Goethe, Molière, or Sophocles.

FRAGMENTS

7

FRAGMENTS OF A DRAMATIC PIECE

CHARLES I. *loquitur*

I YET remember, when at Theobald's
That happy summer of my thirteenth year,
How, tired with sport and young hilarity,
I sank to rest at evening, while the bird,
Mellowing his wood-notes to the mellow west,
Piped lullaby. Then England basked in Peace
And Harvest followed Hope ; and every day
Still added to the green hale growth of life
Beauty and Joy and Vigour, till at length
Youth, making wanton with my foolish heart,
Grew weary of the long-robed plodding times.

CHARLES I.

Night alone on the leads at Whitehall

'Tis marvellously hushed, there's never a sound,
No, not the jolting of a tumbrel's wheel,
A watch-call, or a whistle from the stairs,
Nor anything to look on save those lights
Which wave against the porches of St. Paul's ;
The city has sealed up her swarthy lips,
Nor will commit one breath to the night air,
Jealous of some foul secret.

A RECOLLECTION OF STRAFFORD

(A Courtier speaks)

You cannot have forgotten that great man ;
I saw him stand upon the scaffold's height
Lifted to such a death. He spake as sweetly,
Moved with as brave and lightsome majesty,
As ever he was wont. And on his forehead,
The throne of thought, shone out the mighty soul
At peace with God and man ; and so died Strafford.
That he was wise shall England's woes bear witness,
That he was brave let England's foes deny,
That he is dead God pardon his accusers.

LORD FALKLAND

(Shepherd's Boy)

OFTTIMES, of a summer's day,
He lies beneath the honest cope of heaven,
Happy, he cares not why. The ground-fly's buzz,
The chirp of grasshoppers, the panting breeze
That flags upon the greensward of the dell,
Visit his senses gently. He meanwhile,
In dreamy indolence, beholds unvexed
The jolly year roll on.

SONGS IN THE OLD STYLE




VIOLET BUDS

WHEN violet buds are in the shaw,
 Ere yet the upland brakes are green,
And whistling winds
Bestir the hinds
 To sowing of the bean ;
When the lusty year steals through the glade,
And buxom is the young grass-blade,
And to the evening from the tree
The throstles pour their melody,
 With the pipe, with the song,
 The meadows among,
 Ye that blithe and lightsome be

Make melody,
Make melody,
For the dead sleep heavily.

Where are the feet that once did play
About these dells with pipe and song?
The dust is their bed ;
They are shrouded and dead ;
So merrily push the hours along,
For youth and merriment soon pass o'er,
And we must lie down to rise no more ;
Where the midnight cleaves to the cypress-tree,
And the tombstones glimmer dimly ;
Then with pipe and song,
The meadows among,
Ye that blithe and lightsome be
Make melody,



Make melody,

For the dead sleep heavily.

Father and mother and all your kin,

And ye that listen with flushing cheeks,

There's a home for all,

Deep, dark, and small !

Where no one to a neighbour speaks ;

But the heart that bounded, the eye that shone,

And the lips that warbled, are wasted and gone,

And all that was lovely is hid away

In darkness, silence, and decay ;

So with pipe and song,

The meadows among,

Ye that blithe and lightsome be

Make melody,

Make melody,

For the dead sleep heavily.



WINTER

WHEN hungry fowl go roosting soon,
And nightly shines the crystal moon

O'er silent rills,

And icy winds their bugles blow,
And crisping sheet the powdery snow

Out o'er the hills ;

Then merrily, merrily trim the fire,
Merrily troll about the bowl,

And merrily sing to your heart's desire,

For to solace the winter's lack

There's nothing so good as song and sack

So merrily, merrily trim the fire.

When barns at early eve are fast,
And woodmen from the darkling waste
 Their wallets bear,
And teams are housed by lanthorn light,
And fold-yards littered down at night
 With special care ;
Then merrily, merrily trim the fire,
Merrily troll about the bowl,
And merrily sing to your heart's desire,
For to solace the winter's lack
There's nothing so good as song and sack ;
 So merrily, merrily trim the fire.

WHATE'ER I DO

WHATE'ER I do, whate'er I say,
 Within me still there lives a flame
That steals my wandering thoughts away,
 And points to one I dare not name.

Unquenchably the ardour burns
 As bounds the young blood through my breast,
The frown of sober Reason spurns,
 And laughs at Duty's high behest.

Humbly I asked the gentle Muse
 To rid me of the cruel smart ;

But oh ! I found her touch infuse
A deeper fervour to my heart.

She laughed to see the conscious flush
Run quivering through my languid frame,
And I could only sigh and blush,
And think of one I dare not name.

Right sternly, then, I tasked my mind
With law and logic, night and day,
But only in the end to find
The time and trouble thrown away.

For though I saw each human right
Shielded by statutes and decrees,
Oh ! there was nothing to requite
My bosom for its stolen ease.

And when I turned me to the schools,
I found no logic strong as love ;
Through all their figures, terms, and rules
Unawed, his burning shafts he drove.

Again in anguish and despair
A suppliant I the Muse addressed,
That she would come with love to share
The troubled empire of my breast.

But oh ! she only laughed the more,
And bade me bow to Love alone,
For his ambitious soul he swore
Would neither yield nor share the throne.

So then with solemn plight I vowed
Allegiance true to Love's command ;

The modest Muse benignly bowed,
And gave her lyre into my hand.

But when she bade me strike and sing,
Lo, all the numbers I could frame
Rose trembling from the impassioned string,
In praise of one I dare not name.

APPENDIX



JOURNEY TO YORK

RAILWAY TRAVELLING, 1848, NIGHT TRAIN,

L. and N. W.

FROM London's den emerging, northward bound,

In thy society, far-travelled Pole,

Companions

In books and men and manners learn'd, and thine,

Discretest Faber, whose mild eloquence

The halls of Durham much delight to hear ;

Joyous I fare.

'Tis evening's votive hour.

Through falling dews, through twilight's whispering

gloom,

And floods of moonlight wan, fast, fierce, and
loud,

Clatters the iron steed's earth-shaking tramp.

Rings his shrill neigh, that makes the welkin quiver,

Labours his fervid bulk, his nostrils flash

The whirling steam-cloud and the glittering fires.

On beetling bank and stately viaduct,

Through tunnels roaring back the rapid din

And ghastly chasms borne ; what pause, what stay ?

Berkhamp-
stead.
Leighton.
Wolverton.

Scarce Berkhampstead nor Leighton's tranquil spire,

Nor all the wakeful nymphs of Wolverton,

Blisworth.

Nor Blisworth, hoarse with round Northampton
beeves,

Rugby.

Nor Rugby's shades, dear to the learned Muse,

Whispering a welcome thro' the sweet night air,

Leicester.

Nor Leicester (all her clashing shuttles hushed),

Derby.

Nor Derby's towers, far slumbering in the gloom,



Our headlong course detain. Passed quick as
thought,

Wingfield, are thy lone halls so oft bedewed Wingfield.

By the unpitied tear of Scotland's queen !

The mid-watch flies apace, by downy wing

Of Somnus fanned, but ever and anon

Reviving converse cheerly circles round.

Tale, argument, and jest oft interposed

With pinch of pungent grain (but not for me,

Foul practice by my riper years renounced) ;

Nor had we been unmindful, as time served,

Of Mocha's fragrant berry, to imbibe

The infusion, breathing thoughts of joyous hue.

But to the poet (wight accustomed long,

In grinding anguish tossed to bide the shrill,


Immitigable wrath that WILL be heard

Of Christian small, in crib or *berceaunette*,

Fretting the rushlight hours) how tranquil seemed
Those shadowy moments, though anon there rose
Debate loud, long, and earnest. With us joined
At Rugby's post a tall, well-fashioned youth
(Erst bred to wield the bolts of naval Mars,
But by an ampler fortune since estranged
From the rude billows and the embattled deck),
Equipped for sport on Scotland's western moor,
With eager dogs, horses, and serving-men.

blem in
idshaw.

Long had he journeyed when, as from a dream
Starting, he kens our journey's eastward line,
And how, by journeying east, to reach the west,
Unless, by rounding all the convex world,
Even he, in devious science versed of tack,
Winning advantage of the veering gales,
Is sorely at a loss to comprehend.
Much now the reasoning and conjecture vague,



Confusion worse confounded, till at length
Bland Faber, rousing from his sleepy nook
(Faber alone of all the sons of men,
Able occultest oracle to unfold
Of guidebook), straight his witful scheme erects.
Dark numbers now are summed, and mystic lines
With muttered lore. Meanwhile the lamp, with fume
Caliginous and stenchy vapours dark,
Veils his affrighted fires. At length 'tis done ;
The mild response propitious is obtained,
And Somnus reassumes his welcome sway.
Nor shall the Muse surmise what moody dreams
Through legal slumbers flit. Detective Bill,
Perverse demurrer, intercepting plea,
Answer point-blank and replication flat,
Retainer plump and folio-measured gains,
And sweet refresher, fruit of opening term.


Lamp goes
out.

She quits the inglorious theme without a sigh,
Impatient nobler matter to ensue.

Rotherham. And swiftly now we fly those swarthy fields,
Where with Cyclopean force, and sights and sounds
To midnight traveller dire, earth's guilty sons
Their mother's peaceful entrails would embroil.

But happier haunts succeed, and uplands gray,
Where couch the slumbering flocks and softly wave
The hedgerow elm and cresting coppice green.
Nor long shall morn delay. Lo ! yonder wood,
Whose darkling summits lift against the sky,
The stubborn oak's scant shade has caught the
sound,

And, creeping through his thousand alleys dim,
The chilly fragrance moves. Along his brow,
Pensive and pure and waxing silently,
The dayspring mates the stars. Anon 'tis day,



Bright clouds are floating on the buxom wind,
And Phoebus, radiant from the eastern foam,
Hath in his glory drown'd the heavens wide.

O tedious Normanton, how long didst thou
Our burning speed enchain? What spectacles
Didst thou disclose? Here for industrious Leeds,
Black Huddersfield, and stirring Halifax,
For Bradford, by the poet justly loved,
And thy delicious vale, fair queen of floods!
Sweet Verbia, glittering through the moorland hills,
The busy tracks diverge. Here slow alight
The clothier, stunt and shrewd, with plodding brow,
The adventurous merchant, and the factor sly,
And gent commercial, versed in bills of fare,
And a vast throng besides. Lo! forth they crawl,
Vapid and sour, in various dishabille,
With horrent chin and boot of dusky hue.

Normanton
Station for
W. Riding.

And even fair woman seems to have forgot
Her loveliness, in tallowy stupor set,
And leaden gaze. They stretch, they yawn, they
scratch,

At length, thank Heaven, we leave them all behind.

York.

And so to York. Alas ! at York I part
With that society which sped the hours
So sweetly. Nor at York, so often sung,
The nodding Muse, mindful of cloak and bag,
Would have found matter worthy of record,
Had not in bodily presence there appeared

The railway
king.

The mighty king of spades.¹ Cheery and round,
His portly front betokened zestful fare :
Of callipash, luxurious lord of stews,
Firm turbot, toothsome cod, and creamy flake
Of salmon, blushing from Sabina's shoal ;

¹ Mr. Hudson, the railway king, called " King of Spades."



Haunch chine and baron obese and capon fat,
And each elaborate condiment absorbed
With studious gust, by aid incorporated
Of brave Oporto, Xeres' golden juice,
Bordeaux, and choicest nectar, pink and pale,
Of fair champagne. O glorious potentate !
The rage of mightiest elements conflicting,
Imprisoned toils for *thee*. Nor space nor time
Can hold his own against thee. While each day
Grumbling, suspecting, credulous John Bull
Opens a fresh exchequer to thy hand.
How can the frugal poet look on thee,
Or, having seen thy plenitude, revert
To his own drudging sphere of slender gain,
And "chop and kidney," chilled with Adam's ale ?
Nor long may York detain him, sounds again
The summons shrill. On other wheels he flies

Across thy verdant glebe, far-winding Ouse,
And Derwent, thy moist vales, by ruined towers
Of Kirkham, graced and blessed by good Carlisle.

Eight days does Knapton's hospitable hall
Hold him entranced, with every social joy
And every rural charm. Anon one hour,
And Scarborough, bright Hygeia's loved abode—
Scarborough, to happy memory ever dear,
Breasting the eastern billows' headlong foam,
Concludes alike the journey and the song.

THE SONG OF THE LONDON BUTCHER
OF FIFTY YEARS AGO

BEEF and mutton and lamb and veal,
Chopper and block and knife and steel ;
Heydey, hey, my sweet pretty maid,
There's nothing in life like the butchering trade.
D'ye buy, buy, buy, buy, buy ?

Oh, the slaughterman's work with song ill suits
Down on some basement story, oh—
In his thick trunk-hose and his greasy boots,
So horribly splashed and gory, oh.
Ah, what on earth can stand his blow !

It lays the herd's huge champion low,
And the slaughterman's favours are red and blue ;
What his politics are he'll leave to you.

Heydey, hey, my sweet pretty maid,
There's nothing in life like the butchering trade.
D'ye buy, buy, buy, buy, buy?

Oh, the butcher's young men are so dapper and
smart,

They sets all the gals in a fluster, oh ;
How gaily they start on their rounds in cart
To the tune of a march or a muster, oh !

Ah ! Mary and Sairy and Betty, be wary,
And don't chat with these handsome young chaps
in the airy ;
For their words are so sweet, and they've such
winning arts,



That while steeling your knives they'll be stealing
your hearts,

Then you'll whimper and pine and wish once and
again

That you'd never talked with the butcher's young
men.

Sing heydey, hey, my sweet pretty maid,
There's nothing in life like the butchering trade.

D'ye buy, buy, buy, buy ?

The blue-boy galloping with the tray,

You'd think he was out on a foray, oh ;

With one spur on he clips it away,

And there he is in his glory, oh.

His cheeks and his nose

Are as red as the rose,

And his shining hair shakes out as he goes ;

152 *THE SONG OF THE LONDON BUTCHER*

The rain may patter, the tempest bawl,
The markets may rise, or the stars may fall,
But the blood is up in the little black mare.
Good folks in the road, look out ! take care !
Sing heydey, hey, my sweet pretty maid,
There's nothing in life like the butchering trade.
D'ye buy, buy, buy, buy, buy ?

The mistress she never touches the knife,
The very thought would disgust her, oh ;
And the butcher's wife is the pride of his life,
To his shop she adds such lustre, oh.
She's so comely and sweet, she sets off all the
meat,
Lor', to look in her face I declare it's a treat.
Her fine morning dress is got up in good style,
For every customer she has a smile ;

But take all our hands round, I'll engage there's
not one

That dares leave the mistress's orders undone.

Sing heydey, hey, my sweet pretty maid,
There's nothing in life like the butchering trade.
D'ye buy, buy, buy, buy, buy?

But the master of all is mighty and grand,

So with him I shall finish my story, oh.

With pen in hand he takes his stand,

His handsome whiskers are hoary, oh.

Just see how he looks at both sides of the books,

He knows what's on the bench, and what's up on
the hooks,

And his smart top-boots, so beautifully shined,

To the well-cut kerseys looped and twined,

His apron, his coat, and his lily-white tie,

Are all of the very best. D'ye buy, buy, buy ?

Sing heydey, hey, my sweet pretty maid,

There's nothing in life like the butchering trade.

D'ye buy, buy, buy, buy, buy ?

So I've sung to the praise of the butchering trade,

Never were praises juster, oh ;

If our bills are but paid our fortunes are made,

And there's no one to bully or bluster, oh.

But while Austrians and Prussians and fierce bloody

Russians

Shake all the world round with disputes and con-

cussions,

The sea keeps us safe from all trouble and dread,

Our cattle increase and our folks must be fed ;

So look which way you will, it must sure be agreed

That the butchering trade is the best trade indeed.



Sing heydey, hey, my sweet pretty maid,
There's nothing in life like the butchering trade.
D'ye buy, buy, buy, buy, buy?

Beef and mutton and lamb and veal,
Chopper and block and knife and steel ;
Sing heydey, hey, my sweet pretty maid,
There's nothing in life like the butchering trade.
D'ye buy, buy, buy, buy, buy?

[A puzzle for translators to be turned into German.]

EPIGRAM

ALICE

ALICE ! Alice ! pretty Alice !

One would say

This lovely day

Should kill all malice.

Why, then, the sneer upon that lip,

And that nose's scornful tip,

And all those contemptuous flashes

Darting through your long soft lashes ?

Is it to let your sisters see

How very cruel you can be,
Or only just to madden me?

Alice ! Alice !

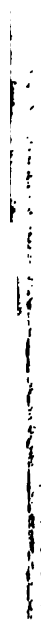
Unrepenting,

Unrelenting,

Most tormenting,

Little Alice.

THE END



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